

PRESIDENT’S LETTER — DOUG KIRK

Do you get tired of reading my monthly diatribes but force yourself to take a quick look on the off chance that I might have found something worthwhile to say? Well, you’re very nearly in luck because this is my last one! I’m not running for re-election and will be voted out of office at this month’s meeting!

It’s a good thing too. I’m getting pretty old—okay, really old—and I’ve been president, vice-president or newsletter editor since the turn of the century! KBC needs fresh faces and fresh ideas. “Fresh” is an adjective no longer applicable to this old coot.

Thinking back on the roughly 35 years I’ve been riding and associated with KBC I’m struck by all the changes a third of a century has thrust on bicycles and bicycling. Even though my memory ain’t so great anymore, I’m happy to consign a few things to the dustbin of history.

Back then there wasn’t a single bike lane in Kalamazoo County. The bridges over US-131 and I-94 were two-lane with no shoulder at all (Both these bridges have been widened at least twice since 1985). And there was no decent shoulder on practically any of our favorite roads.

You think road riding is scary now? Imagine riding out Oakland or Parkview at rush hour with NO shoulder (No wonder mountain biking was a hit). It’s remarkable how much better riding conditions are nowadays, and it’s reflected by how many more people are out there riding their bikes. But even with the improvements to the roads, the changes to bicycles are really remarkable.

In 1985, clipless pedals hadn’t been invented yet. You either rode regular “platform” pedals or bolted on toe clips and used leather straps to attach your feet to the pedals. Falling over at stoplights was lots easier back then! Or you could leave the straps loose, thereby making them practically useless. (But you looked cool!)

Bikes had 10 speeds—five gears in back and two chainrings in front. We thought it was great when Shimano (or was it Sun-tour?) managed to find room for a 6th cog. And it was nothing short of miraculous a year or two later when “ultra” seven speed gear clusters appeared. Who could possible need more than 14 gears?

No indexed shifting either. You took your hand off the handlebar to reach the downtube, where little levers made the derailleurs slide back and forth. You had to get each lever in just the right spot or the chain would chatter or shift to another gear—usually right when you stood up for a hill or a sprint. **Cont. on p. 3**



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Please send photos of your rides to:

editor@kalamazooBicycle
Club.org

KBC Business

The next KBC meeting will be Tuesday, November 9 at 7:00 p.m. at Shakespeare's Pub, 241 E Kalamazoo Ave. Up the steps, to the back and left.

Finance report as of 10/11/21, Pam Sotherland

PREVIOUS BALANCE CASH (PNC Checking + PayPal) ACCOUNTS: \$16,416

Monthly RECEIPTS (Cash In): \$356

Monthly EXPENSES: **\$1,663**

CURRENT BALANCE CASH ACCOUNTS: \$15,109

TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS: \$4,048

Discretionary Expenses: **\$500**

Education Fund: **\$2,503**

ROR21: **\$1,045**

ENCUMBERED EXPENSES: \$0

AVAILABLE Balance for Remaining Budgeted Expenses: \$11,061

Current Cash minus Designated Funds minus Encumbered Expenses

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT: \$6,189

Minutes of KBC Meeting - October 12, 2021

ATTENDANCE	Paul Guimond	Terry O'Connor
Shaun Ballard	Doug Kirk	Pam Sotherland
Stacie Ballard	Kathy Kirk	Gordy Vader
Clark Bennett	Renee Mitchell	Paul Wells
Charlie Grdina	Mike Mock	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) REPORTS:

President: Doug Kirk

Tonight nominations will be happening for Executive Committee positions.

Vice President: Paul Guimond

Club rides have been well attended, it appears what is important to KBC members consists of the group rides, insurance, and end of year party.

Treasurer: Pam Sotherland

Presented the treasurers report.

KBC is in a solid financial place. Pam compared this year-to-date with last year-to-date (excluding KalTour) it is very similar which shows that this year the club managed funds really well. Expenses coming up consist of

KalTour and the Team Clark Logic Race Team sponsorship. Gordy Vader suggested donating funds to the KalHaven trailhead due to how often club members use the KalHaven Trail and trailhead pavilion. Another suggestion came up to contribute to the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. It would be important to inquire about how designated donations are spent to ensure money is spent in the direction the club is intending.

DIRECTORS REPORTS:

Education Chair: Paul Wells

The Education Committee met this week, and it has been decided **bike camp** will be happening next summer. The format may change, many ideas were discussed, the committee will meet again within the next month to make decisions and present to the club. Ideas the group had to bring in more people and introduce them to the club consisted of reducing the number of days, including online components, and incorporating club rides into the schedule.

There are 250 **5-foot yard signs** available that came in recently and distribution will be happening soon. These signs were ordered from the donation from the Chain Gang Memorial fund.

NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nominations for Executive Committee:

John Knowlton was nominated for President

Paul Guimond was nominated for Vice President

Pam Sotherland was nominated for Treasurer

The election will take place during the November meeting.

PALM Bike Tour:

Mike Mock is going to SAG for the tour and is looking to get others involved, the event is starting in Whitehall.

President's letter, cont.

And tires! Tires are so much better now. It's hard to put in words how much better they are. Back then, if you rode in the city flats were routine. No one ever got 1000 miles out of a rear tire—either the tread was gone or it had succumbed to a big tear in the sidewall. (On the other hand they cost \$10.00!)

Wheels had 36 spokes—nearly twice as many as nowadays—and broken spokes were still routine. No serious rider could hope to go a full season without breaking at least a couple of spokes along the way. We used to carry spare spokes and we either knew how to re-true a wheel ourselves or were on a first-name basis with the mechanic at the bike shop.

Enough nostalgia! You get the idea—when old fogeys (like me) start talking about “the good old days”, maybe those days weren't as nice as we claim. Believe it or not, we are living in a golden age of bicycling. Enjoy the ride. I'll see you out there.

Email: president@kalamazooobicycleclub.org

KBC Statistics (Thanks to Rick Whaley for managing these details!)

[Please check for your name here!](#)

Total Memberships: 299 — Total Individuals: 513

New or Renewed Members: Nick & Kelley Hampton; Jim Kindle; Tim Krone; Joseph Morton; Kelly O'Sullivan; Jacinda Roedel; Paul Wells & Family

November Expiring Members: Russell Bertch; Tim & Liz Popp

2021 Ride to South Haven

The 2021 Ride to South Haven took place on Saturday, October 2 and featured two Ride to South Haven firsts. 1) The ride was held in October. 2) The women outnumbered the men. Eight riders, 5 females and 3 males, were not at all frightened by the prospect of a little rain and began their quest for delicious subs and a view of the lakeshore (or a quest for delicious convenience store food and a view of downtown Lawrence) shortly after 8:00 AM from the KVCC campus in Texas Township. And, unlike in late August, the heat index was mercifully below 100 degrees.

After a stop for the aforementioned food and view in Lawrence, Katie Little, Jacinda Roedel, and Bill Surna returned to KVCC, while Andrea Fore, Susan Hubert, Marty Knop, Savanna Pavc, and the Ride Leader continued their two-wheeled journey to South Haven. After the usual South Haven feast, they headed back to KVCC, which included the traditional second stop in Lawrence. They arrived at KVCC shortly after 5:00 PM, a leisurely ride and a good one. Although there was evidence of rain in Paw Paw and just east of Mattawan, the intrepid South Haven riding quintet managed to successfully avoid rain. And when the RL got back to his car and saw that his cyclometer was registering 102.97 miles, he rode around his car a couple of times in order to break the magic 103 mile barrier, thus ensuring a peaceful night's sleep.



At the Lawrence Citgo convenience store. From left to right, the RL, Savanna, Jacinda, Marty, Bill, Andrea, and Susan, with Katie in the foreground. Upon entering Lawrence, it appears that we had stumbled into some sort of bizarro backwards world.

Rick Whaley, Ride to South Haven Ride Leader

Thanks, KBC! Stacie and Shaun Ballard

There comes a time when change is inevitable and life pulls you in new directions. We have been actively involved with the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club since completing Bike Camp during the summer of 2018. As we pack up to leave Kalamazoo for new job opportunities in Bloomington, Indiana, we are most sad to part ways with KBC and the incredible people who have become much more than riding companions, but friends and a large part of our lives.

As we've reflected on our time with KBC, we've grown into strong riders because of you all. Thinking back to our days in bike camp on our department store bikes, having just bought a pair of bike shorts (gosh, we probably own more bike shorts and jerseys now than we know what to do with, not to mention the n + 1 rule). It's safe to say we have upgraded from our department store bikes! We had no clue what we were getting into. Thom Brennan and Tim Verdries brought comradery to bike camp sessions and the KBC Monday Night Rides (MNR). Renee Mitchell is the one who convinced us to come out for a MNR, even though we were scared not knowing if we could keep up with the group. Teri Olbrot and Valerie Vuk were constants for Stacie attending the Tuesday Night Women's Ride where she learned how to draft and best practices for group riding all together as well as gained more confidence to get out on the roads. A big shoutout goes to John and Julie Knowlton, who we first met at Boatyard Brewing Co. during the 2018 Bike Week event and we were always excited to see them at group rides and other KBC events. The Ballards were regulars in Julie and Thom's Monday Night Ride and always looked forward to laughs, seeing the buffalo on 4th, and fun selfies on that route. Eventually, we started riding on Wednesday nights with Gordy Vader, and you could say we were bit by the cycling bug at this point. Being able to help out with bike camp the following year, becoming ride leaders and lead KBC rides (our entire family knew the meeting we attended to get sanctioned because we were SO excited), and then Stacie became the Secretary for KBC. Having the pleasure of becoming friends with Doug and Kathy Kirk, Paul and Pam Sotherland, Paul Wells, Paul Guimond, and Katie Little has been a true pleasure. There have been so many of you who have impacted us, and we will never forget our time in KBC. Joining KBC has truly changed our lives as we were able to discover cycling, a hobby we now love and a large part of our identity.

Coming out for a group ride or to a club meeting may seem a little scary at first, but we promise you won't regret it, and the skills and friendships you gain will make all the difference.

Thanks again, KBC!

Tailwinds,
Shaun and Stacie Ballard



“Free” Fitness

Editor’s Letter, John Knowlton

Some might remember the old Popeye cartoons. The cast was made up of Popeye the sailor man. His secret strength came from eating a can of spinach whenever he got into a scrap with his arch-rival, Brutus. Brutus and Popeye were always fighting over Olive Oyl. Looking back, the cartoon writers didn’t give poor Olive Oyl much of a will or say over her life. Present day commentators might say that she lacked agency. Basically, whichever guy won the fight took Olive as a spoil of war. (To be fair, the Popeye comic strip was developed in the early 1930’s and there has been a lot of water over the cultural dam since then.) There was another minor character named Wimpy. Full name: J. Wellington Wimpy. As you can guess from his name, Wimpy wasn’t involved in the contests over Olive. His primary drive was for hamburgers. As he didn’t have a job, he was also called Wimpy the Moocher. His most recognizable line was, “I’ll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.” Wimpy always wanted a hamburger. A *free* hamburger.

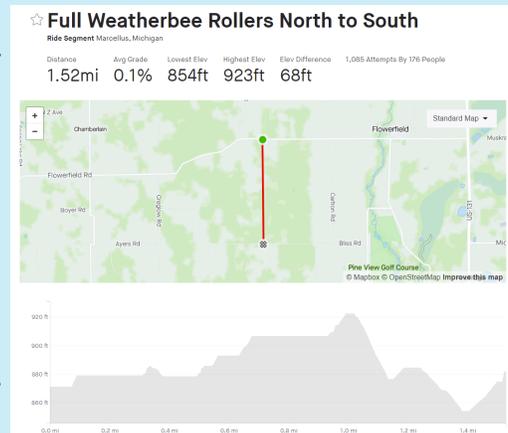
Athletes often work hard to improve their performance. They will hire a coach, hit the weight room, do long slow distance, and drive themselves through intervals. They watch their diet, monitor sleep and use massage to speed recovery. Endurance athletes wear heart rate monitors, heart rate variability monitors, and power meters. Competitive or even just serious cyclists plan out their season, identifying key events where they want their performance to peak. The training plan is built around those key events. The only year I was this dedicated to performance was 2020 when I planned to ride mountain passes in the Italian Dolomites. Key events included three gravel races, each progressively longer than the last. I was also going to ride 100+ miles and climb 10,000 feet up North Carolina’s Mount Mitchell (the highest point east of the Mississippi). As the plague spread, I dropped the coach after March and started focusing on survival instead of performance.

After training for a big event and then completing it, most people need a few days of recovery. That recovery provides a boost in fitness. It turns out that human bodies aren’t machines, however we analogize them. They won’t run at 100% without a break. Since I was young, I have found it fascinating that we pass about 1/3 of our day, every day, unconscious. This seems a very expensive chunk of time. While sleeping you aren’t eating, gathering food, farming, defending or attacking, procreating, parenting, working, or anything else that we normally think of as productive. A couple times in college I tried to ignore this biological imperative. After 40 hours awake, I can’t put three words together that make sense. Sleep turns out to be expensive, but a real bargain in the end. Sleep is foundational to the daily work and recovery cycle. Despite the popular notion that virtually everyone needs more sleep, I find that 7 hours on a regular basis gives me a chance to get by on 4 or 5 once every week or two. Sometimes, I just wake up at 3 a.m., ready for the day. I have learned to be a cool morning person, really stealthy so I don’t wake anyone up. I don’t practice drums at that hour, anymore.

When training for a key race or long effort in the saddle athletes are engaging in a longer cycle of work and recovery. It might be weeks or compose of a series of month-long cycles. This is called a periodized approach to training. The huge work of a big race or event demands a reciprocal recovery. And then the recovery is followed by an echo sometimes called “free fitness.” A few days or a week after the big day the athlete is really strong. The steps up to the second floor are no longer daunting and the headache is a memory. Riding or running seems almost effort-

less. This bounce is called “free” because it comes *after* the training and event have already passed. There was no training intended to deliver this result. We wanted results last week at the race or the hill climb and all of the intervals were aimed at producing power and endurance for the big “X” on the calendar.

Accidentally I found some free fitness this past summer. My riding season was strange: in May I was framing an addition to our house. The heat and long days using tools and lifting beams left me wrung out. Hard riding was out of the question. June and early July we were on an epic RV trip with the family. So, about July 10 my season started over. After a couple weeks I did a solo 100+ mile ride to meet my family at a campsite. That was three weeks before a 150-mile One Day Ride Across Michigan. After 8 and a half hours in the saddle I took a few days off. On the fifth day Julie and I rode together: she on an electric assist gravel bike while I had only legs. She kept saying, “I thought we were going to take it easy” and boosting the assist level. I didn’t feel like we were going hard, but the GPS file said we were scooting right along. One week after ODRAM I was on a solo gravel ride. Lost in thought, my brain stumbled over a question: I wonder when the Wetherbee hill is coming up? Consciously engaging my eyes, I realized it had passed and I was turning on to the next road. At the time I thought, “That was weird – I’m usually gasping for breath at the top.” After the ride my GPS told me I had set a personal record up the climb. A climb that I didn’t even notice.



Free fitness is a great gift to athletes. But there is a broader application to anyone seeking to get better at anything. When you do more than normal, you build your capacity to achieve in the future. We can get free fitness in our parenting, in loving our spouse, making sales calls, coaching a team, giving presentations, recruiting volunteers or whatever is important in your world. In my last career as a financial advisor, veterans typically had about 5 client meetings per week. In the early 2000’s I thought I was the stuff because I was doing 7 or 8. But in June of 2005 I had a week where there were 19 on the calendar. And one was to pick up a half million dollars in Florida. So that week I did about 4 times as much work as a typical peer including four flights and an overnight in another state. That week was terrible and awesome! Like a huge day on the bike. It tested my stamina, focus and determination. I was so tired, but elated, too. And there was free fitness to follow. After that I raised my “normal” week to about 12 client meetings. Because of the work and recovery cycle I had gone through, a dozen meetings seemed easy. When you serve your spouse through a long illness you build up your marriage muscle. Helping your kid navigate a mental health breakdown pumps up your parenting power. Fighting through a dry season as a salesperson by making more calls and knocking more doors develops your sales ability. Just like on the bike, we get “free” fitness after a whole lot of work.

Wimpy never worked and he never fought. But he also never had the satisfaction of earning his hamburger, and he never got the girl. As successful people, we work hard for our free fitness, and we become exceptionally effective.

This piece was originally published on my blog “Thinking for Success” at johnknowlton.substack.com. Every Wednesday I sent out mental models for being more productive, efficient, and better relationships. Weekends are for cycling, travel, song lyrics and other things that fall out of my brain.

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